

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 05418 142126Z
ACTION INR-07

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 /018 W
-----150527Z 078337 /15

R 141334Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2731
INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
USCINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 5418

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINR, IN
SUBJ: BIO DATA ON CHARAN SINGH, MINISTER FOR HOME
AFFAIRS

1. BORN DECEMBER 23, 1902 IN BARABANKI, NEAR LUCKNOW
IN UTTAR PRADESH, SINGH IS FROM A JAT FAMILY. (THE JATS
ARE RELATIVELY PROSPEROUS FARMERS.) HE WAS EDUCATED AT
AGRA UNIVERSITY, WHERE HE RECEIVED AN MA IN 1925 AND AN
LLB IN 1928.

2. SINGH BECAME ACTIVE IN THE CONGRESS PARTY IN THE
LATE THIRTIES AND WAS ARRESTED SEVERAL TIMES IN CONNECTION
WITH THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT. HE WAS REPUTED TO HAVE BEEN
ONE OF THE MORE MILITANT MEMBERS OF THE "QUIT INDIA"
MOVEMENT. SINCE 1937 TO THE PRESENT HE HAS BEEN A MEMBER
OF THE UP LEGISLATURE. HE HAS HELD VARIOUS MINISTERIAL
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PORTFOLIOS IN THE STATE INCLUDING JUSTICE, INFORMATION,
AGRICULTURE, REVENUE, TRANSPORT, AND HOME. FOR TWO BRIEF
PERIODS HE HEADED COALITION GOVERNMENTS IN UP AS THE
CHIEF MINISTER: 1967-68 AND IN 1970. HE HAS NEVER
BEEN A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT UNTIL HIS ELECTION EARLIER
THIS MONTH ON THE JANATA TICKET.

3. CHARAN SINGH WITHDREW FROM THE CONGRESS PARTY IN 1967 REALIZING THAT HIS POLITICAL FORTUNES COULD BETTER BE SERVED BY FORMING A PEASANT-BASED PARTY, THE BKD, THE BHARTIYA KRANTI DAL. IN 1974 HE FOUNDED THE BHARTIYA LOK DAL, BLD, IN WHICH THE BKD REMAINS AN IMPORTANT GROUP. AS CHIEF MINISTER OF UP IN 1967 SINGH WAS FACED WITH LANGUAGE RIOTS. HIS WILLINGNESS TO CATER TO HIS COALITION ALLIES LED TO A FURTHER BREAKDOWN OF LAW AND ORDER. IT WAS CLEAR TO OBSERVERS AT THAT TIME THAT THE PRESERVATION OF HIS POLITICAL SKIN WAS CHARAN SINGH'S FIRST CONCERN. THIS CLOUDED THE REPUTATION HE PREVIOUSLY HAD FOR PERSONAL INTEGRITY.

4. CHARAN SINGH'S JAT BACKGROUND IS SAID TO MAKE HIM PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE TO WHAT IS HAPPENING AT THE GRASS ROOTS. HIS CONCERN FOR THE PEASANTRY LED HIM TO TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN ENFORCING LAND REFORM IN UP SINGH WOULD EMPHASIZE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND DEVOTE FEWER RESOURCES TO HEAVY INDUSTRY. IN 1970 CHARAN SINGH DESCRIBED HIMSELF TO OUR AMBASSADOR AS A FRIEND OF THE UNITED STATES AND AN ANTI-COMMUNIST. (HIS SON STUDIED INDUSTRIAL MANAGEMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO AND SUBSEQUENTLY WORKED FOR IBM IN BOMBAY.) WE ARE NOT AWARE OF OTHER VIEWS HE MAY HAVE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS. CHARAN SINGH'S POLITICAL ROLE TO DATE HAS BEEN AS A LEADER OF A REGIONAL PARTY. OUTSIDE OF UP, HARAYANA AND RAJASTHAN HE HAS NO REAL FOLLOWING. SCHNEIDER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION, MINISTER COUNSELORS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 14-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977NEWDE05418
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770130-1242
Format: TEL
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770457/aaaabxny.tel
Line Count: 89
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 603a23a5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION INR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2806818
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BIO DATA ON CHARAN SINGH, MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS
TAGS: PGOV, PINR, IN, (SINGH, CHARAN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/603a23a5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009